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March 4, 2022

Delegate C.T. Wilson, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 708 – Comprehensive Climate Solutions

Dear Chair Wilson and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) is comprised of 18 producer members representing more than 47 production facilities, 24 contractor members, 24 consulting engineer firms and 41 other associate members. We proactively work with regulatory agencies to represent the interests of the asphalt industry both in the writing and interpretation of state and federal regulations that may affect our members. We also advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

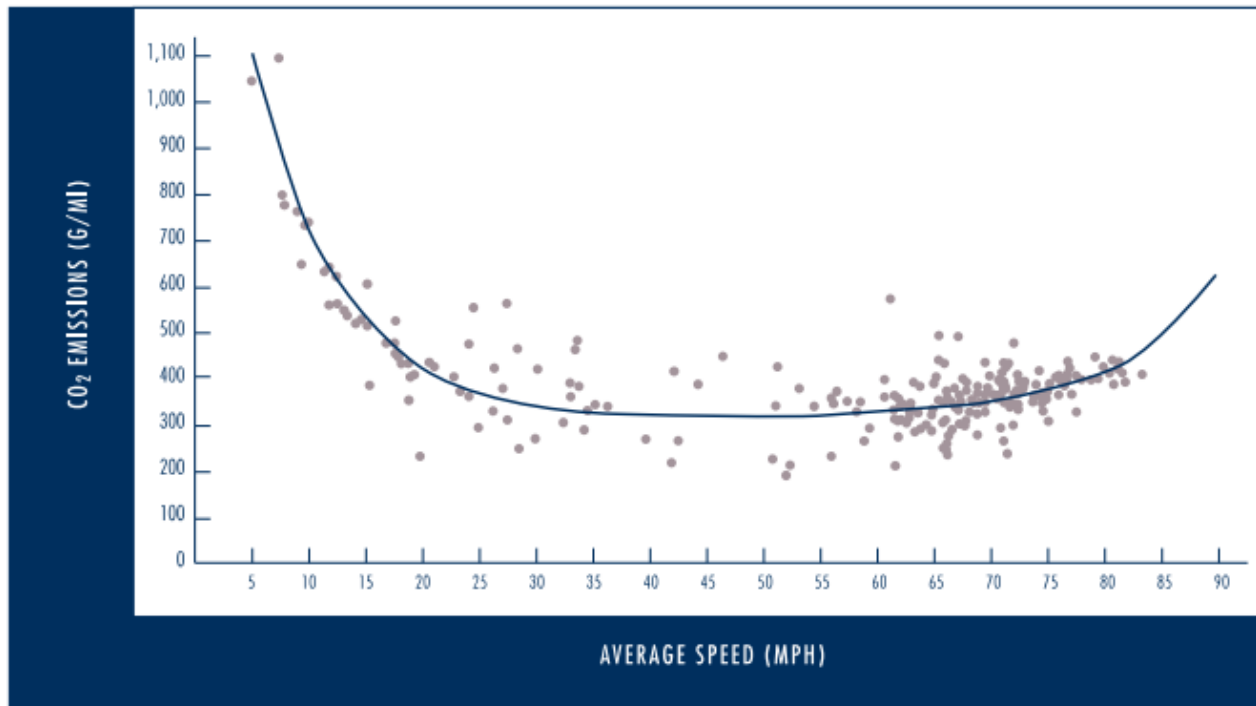
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 708 – Comprehensive Climate Solutions. I will start by saying we greatly appreciate the intent of this legislation and all legislation aimed at protecting our environment. However, we need to express the serious concerns our Association and its members have with this bill.

On page 8, line 9, the bill states, “A final plan developed under this section...may not include highway widening or additional road construction as a greenhouse gas emission reduction measure.” This directly conflicts with current scientific evidence which shows that improving peak hour speeds for vehicles dramatically reduces emissions per mile, including greenhouse gas emissions, due to reduced fuel consumption at higher, steadier speeds. Please see the attached chart on the next page that highlights this.

Vehicles pollute much less at higher speeds and those gains are not offset by any increase in “induced” demand. Induced travel effects can be measured with precision on specific projects. In recent major highway projects in our region, the induced travel effects of highway construction have been in the range of 1% or less, in terms of increased Vehicle Miles Traveled. This does not even come close to negating the corresponding improvements in emissions per mile due to increased speeds, which can be as much as 40-50% when vehicles get out of “stop-and-go” conditions.

FIGURE 5

Emission-speed plot of individual trips or trip segments



Additionally, this bill seeks to move the goal of greenhouse gas emission reductions from 40% to 60% by 2032, with a Net Zero by 2045. This will cripple our transportation industry that relies on natural gas and other means to dry aggregate and produce the materials needed for our roads. The fiscal impact will be \$18.7 million annually for FY24 through FY26, plus \$13.7 million annually thereafter.

Our residents and industries continue to suffer from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of which may never recover. How can we pass legislation that will increase state expenditures, either by increasing taxes or by moving funding away from other necessary programs at such a challenging time. Our Association thinks it's prudent to pause this conversation until our economy and Maryland's citizens have fully rebounded from this tragedy.

We appreciate your time and letting us address this important matter.

Marshall Klinefelter
President
Maryland Asphalt Association